

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
WEB PAGE SUBCOMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2012 - 1:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Susan Dowling, George Mathanool and Bill Smith
Staff: Eric Beeson, Brian Hancock and Barbara Strother
Other: Deborah Donovan (seCTer), Robert Frink (Citizen), Councilor Bill Johnson,
Nick Sahin, (owner Fort Hill CITGO and Nick Sahin Fiberglass), and Thor
Torgersen (CEO, Pyramid Design & Marketing)

II. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Town Web Page

Bill Smith opened the discussion and handed out key points for the proposed Economic Development portion within the Town's website and proposal for a separate business-friendly EDC website. He commented that it is imperative to optimize visibility of business and tourism opportunities in Groton since the Town of Groton's economic development efforts are becoming increasingly important in light of regional job losses and projected slow recovery in Southeastern Connecticut.

The EDC Subcommittee felt that it is important to have a link for economic development on the Town's main web page, rather than navigating multiple clicks to get to desired business pages. It is recommended to add an extra link in the top menu bar entitled "Business" to make navigation similar to the designs of other regional municipalities' websites.

The attendees noted that new content inclusion for the Town's website would require prior approval of the Town Manager.

Several attendees observed that the current Groton Town website is lacking and insufficient given the pressing need to jumpstart business expansion and job creation in the region.

The attendees agreed that the information on the Economic Development page should be revamped to address lack of depth and void in business content, with bullet points and links wherever possible, instead of long wordy descriptions.

It was noted that if desired, the IT staff may break up the content into different pages (e.g. industry clusters; Tourism; Pharma-Biotech; Defense; Maritime; Education, etc.) for direct the attention of businesses seeking synergy with/by these clusters.

The attendees agreed that appropriate photos are needed with beautiful imagery of sights and businesses within Groton. George Mathanool was able to reach out to a multi-award winning photographer who has kindly consented to share (gratis) his Groton-New London archive to support a dynamic EDC website and its promotion of Groton.

Another issue discussed was content management software (CMS). It was noted that web maintenance may not be carried out sufficiently on an ad-hoc basis by current IT staff, EDC staff and EDC Commission members alone due to the lack of CMS. Content management software is a key factor for grappling with a dynamic website, content delivery errors and obsolete data, so when fully deployed, the Economic Development website shall require more resources.

Bob Frink suggested that for the initial stages we implement manageable content to start and grow them as we gain improved capabilities and technical resources. In addition, to take the current Economic Development data and re-purpose it for correct and better propagation of the website, otherwise it would be an overwhelming and duplicative endeavor.

Workflow hierarchy issues were also raised, including the possible option of an additional web domain (grotonedc.com) within the Town's present web server environment currently hosted by Network Solutions LLC. The attendees noted Barbara Strother's concern over technical and other complications that might arise from dual site hosting on the server. These items remain open.

The following comments were made by Thor Torgersen (CEO, Pyramid MDT):

The current Groton Town website is hosted on "Network Solutions" data center. Any new website could be hosted on the same hosting environment without security concerns.

1. Perception: Perception is critical for sites dealing with any sort of economic development. When competing against other municipalities on the web, the first impression is key to "set the hook" in possible new businesses. Hidden content, content that is too dense, or a site that appears too bureaucratic or behind the times will actually drive visitors away instead of further in. He would recommend beginning with a new site that will begin to address a modern, visually engaging and intuitive web site outside of the current Town website based on the above comments.
2. Building a visually rich look and feel along with a well laid out site is possible under tight budget constraints with the proper planning and direction and partnership. Pyramid MDT is capable to deliver on such a project due to their extensive experience and capabilities.
3. Critical to the success of any website initiative is making sure a well-defined workflow and process chain are in place as well as designated owners of the process. Oversight of the website is critical, but with defined process and invested owners, success is very attainable. Roles and responsibilities should be in place during the development, if not earlier.

The EDC Subcommittee remains consistent in their desire for Groton to realize an alternate website with modern finesse, to guide new Economic Development opportunities, for better marketing and strategy, and improving relations with local and

distant business communities online. As such, the Subcommittee urges the development of a compelling positioning of our areas using dynamic imagery and an effective information architecture with relevant content.

The meeting closed with the following next steps identified:

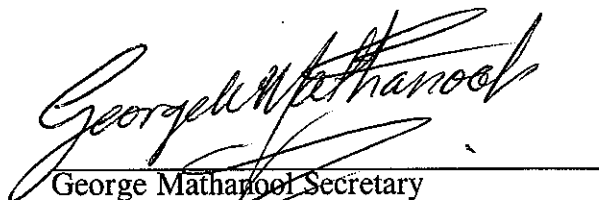
The EDC Subcommittee members are to work on a draft EDC site map. Members should develop their ideas ahead of the next monthly EDC meeting

- Sourcing content management software (CMS)
- Location of EDC website: (1) within Town's website or (2) sharing Town's web host environment for EDC site, thus avoiding interference to the Town's website operations, functionality and security
- Build a site map and workflow
- Sources for any other content (videos, photos, etc.)

The next EDC Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. on February 16th prior to the regular EDC meeting at 12:15 p.m.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.



George Mathanol Secretary
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Barbara Strother
Economic Development Specialist